

## COUNTRY DATA: SOUTH AFRICA: Information from the CIA World Factbook

### INTRODUCTION

Dutch traders landed at the southern tip of modern day South Africa in 1652 and established a stopover point on the spice route between the Netherlands and the Far East, founding the city of Cape Town. After the British seized the Cape of Good Hope area in 1806, many of the Dutch settlers (the Boers) trekked north to found their own republics. The discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1886) spurred wealth and immigration and intensified the subjugation of the native inhabitants. The Boers resisted British encroachments but were defeated in the Boer War (1899-1902); however, the British and the Afrikaners, as the Boers became known, ruled together beginning in 1910 under the Union of South Africa, which became a republic in 1961 after a whites-only referendum. In 1948, the National Party was voted into power and instituted a policy of apartheid - the separate development of the races - which favored the white minority at the expense of the black majority. The African National Congress (ANC) led the opposition to apartheid and many top ANC leaders, such as Nelson MANDELA, spent decades in South Africa's prisons. Internal protests and insurgency, as well as boycotts by some Western nations and institutions, led to the regime's eventual willingness to negotiate a peaceful transition to majority rule. The first multi-racial elections in 1994 brought an end to apartheid and ushered in majority rule under an ANC-led government. South Africa since then has struggled to address apartheid-era imbalances in decent housing, education, and health care. ANC infighting, which has grown in recent years, came to a head in September 2008 when President Thabo MBEKI resigned, and Kgalema MOTLANTHE, the party's General-Secretary, succeeded him as interim president. Jacob ZUMA became president after the ANC won general elections in April 2009.

### GEOGRAPHY

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| <b>Location</b>                        | Southern Africa, at the southern tip of the continent of Africa  |
| <b>Area</b>                            | 1,219,090 sq km  |
| <b>Climate</b>                         | mostly semiarid; subtropical along east coast; sunny days, cool nights   |
| <b>Natural Resources</b>               | gold, chromium, antimony, coal, iron ore, manganese, nickel, phosphates, tin, rare earth elements, uranium, gem diamonds, platinum, copper, vanadium, salt, natural gas  |
| <b>Total Renewable Water Resources</b> | 50 cu km (1990)  |
| <b>Freshwater Withdrawal</b>           | total: 12.5 cu km/yr (31%/6%/63%)<br>per capita: 264 cu m/yr (2000)  |
| <b>Natural Hazards</b>                 | prolonged droughts<br><br>volcanism: the volcano forming Marion Island in the Prince Edward Islands, which last erupted in 2004, is South Africa's only active volcano   |
| <b>Environmental Issues</b>            | lack of important arterial rivers or lakes requires extensive water conservation and control measures; growth in water usage outpacing supply; pollution of rivers from agricultural runoff and urban discharge; air pollution resulting in acid rain; soil erosion; desertification |

### PEOPLE

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| Population                | 49,109,107   |
| Ethnic Groups             | black African 79%, white 9.6%, colored 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.5% (2001 census)   |
| Religions                 | Zion Christian 11.1%, Pentecostal/Charismatic 8.2%, Catholic 7.1%, Methodist 6.8%, Dutch Reformed 6.7%, Anglican 3.8%, Muslim 1.5%, other Christian 36%, other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%, none 15.1% (2001 census)  |
| Languages                 | isiZulu (official) 23.8%, isiXhosa (official) 17.6%, Afrikaans (official) 13.3%, Sepedi (official) 9.4%, English (official) 8.2%, Setswana (official) 8.2%, Sesotho (official) 7.9%, Xitsonga (official) 4.4%, other 7.2%, isiNdebele (official), Tshivenda (official), siSwati (official) (2001 census) |
| Literacy Rate             | 86.4%  |
| Major Infectious Diseases | degree of risk: intermediate<br>food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever<br>water contact disease: schistosomiasis (2009)   |
| GOVERNMENT                |  |
| Type                      | republic   |
| Independence              | 31 May 1910 (Union of South Africa formed from four British colonies: Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange Free State); 31 May 1961 (republic declared); 27 April 1994 (majority rule)  |
| Constitution              | 10 December 1996; note - certified by the Constitutional Court on 4 December 1996; was signed by then President MANDELA on 10 December 1996; and entered into effect on 4 February 1997  |
| Legal System              | based on Roman-Dutch law and English common law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction  |
| ECONOMY                   |  |
| Agricultural Products     | corn, wheat, sugarcane, fruits, vegetables; beef, poultry, mutton, wool, dairy products  |
| Industries                | mining (world's largest producer of platinum, gold, chromium), automobile assembly, metalworking, machinery, textiles, iron and steel, chemicals, fertilizer, foodstuffs, commercial ship repair   |
| Import commodities        | machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum products, scientific instruments, foodstuffs   |
| Import Partners           | China 17.21%, Germany 11.24%, US 7.38%, Saudi Arabia 4.87%, Japan 4.67%, Iran 3.95% (2009)   |
| Export Commodities        | gold, diamonds, platinum, other metals and minerals, machinery and equipment   |
| Export Partners           | China 10.34%, US 9.19%, Japan 7.59%, Germany 7.01%, UK 5.54%, Switzerland 4.72% (2009)   |
| Per Capita GDP            | \$10,300 (2009 est.)   |
| Population below          | 50% (2000 est.)  |

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| poverty line |  |
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\*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.